



June 15, 2023

Paul Vinovich
Chairman of the Board
Office of Congressional Ethics
U.S. House of Representatives
425 3rd Street, S.W., Suite 1110
Washington, DC 20024
Via Electronic Mail: oce@mail.house.gov

**RE: Violation by Adam Schiff of House Rule XXIII & 5 U.S.C. § 7353(a)
(2017-present)**

Dear Mr. Vinovich:

The Center for Renewing America hereby requests that the Office of Congressional Ethics and/or Committee on Ethics expeditiously investigate the matters detailed herein, and impose appropriate disciplinary and remedial action—up to and including expulsion of Rep. Adam Schiff (“Schiff”) from the U.S. House of Representatives (“House”).

In January 2023, Speaker Kevin McCarthy rightly [refused](#) to appoint Schiff to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (“HPSCI”), given Schiff’s misuse of HPSCI—and resultant undermining of its national security and oversight missions—while serving as chair of that committee during the 116th and 117th Congress.

On May 15, 2023, Special Counsel John Durham released a 300-page [report](#) on matters arising from the 2016 election (“Durham Report”). The Durham Report detailed how the Clinton campaign concocted false allegations regarding supposed “collusion” between the Trump campaign and Russia. These baseless claims were funneled to credulous media outlets, the intelligence community, and the Federal Bureau Investigation (“FBI”)—which opened an investigation despite possessing NO evidence of collusion. [According to CNN](#), “Special Counsel John Durham conclude[d] [that the] FBI never should have launched [the] full Trump-Russia probe.”

The Clinton campaign’s fabricated collusion narrative has had no greater champion than Schiff, whose dedication to perpetuating the Russia Hoax without regard for the truth repeatedly violated the requirement, in clause 1 of House Rule XXIII, that “[a] Member .

. . of the House shall behave at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House.” Examples of such violations include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

- On March 20, 2017, Schiff [read into the congressional record](#) significant portions of the salacious and unverified Steele Dossier. The Durham Report confirmed that former British spy Christopher Steele was unable to corroborate any of the substantive allegations in the dossier, “even after being offered \$1 million or more by the FBI for such corroboration.” Even Steele’s primary sub-source, a Russian national, characterized the information he provided to Steele as “rumor and speculation.” However, Schiff’s action gave the [obviously false](#) allegations in the dodgy dossier an undeserved veneer of legitimacy.
- On March 22, 2017, Schiff claimed in a television interview he had seen “[more than circumstantial evidence now](#)” of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. [According to](#) former *New York Times* investigative reporter Jeff Gerth, Schiff “offered no substantiation” for his claim. As confirmed by numerous subsequent investigations, including the Durham Report, no such evidence has emerged. However, Schiff abused his privileged position on HPSCI to mislead the American public.
- On or about, April 4, 2017, Schiff [solicited naked pictures of President Trump](#) from two Russian pranksters posing as Ukrainian parliamentarians. Schiff’s subsequent claim that he reported the call to the proper authorities is inconsistent with his actions, which do not reflect creditably on the House; records published in February 2018 show that Schiff directed his staff to pick up materials promised by the pranksters from the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, D.C.
- In February 2018, Schiff publicly released a declassified version of a January 29, 2018, document widely known as the [Schiff Memo](#). The Schiff Memo vigorously defended the decision by the Department of Justice and FBI to seek Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) surveillance of Carter Page. Among other claims, the Schiff Memo maintained that “FBI and DOJ did not ‘abuse the . . . FISA process [or] omit material information,” and “would have been remiss in their duty to protect the country had they not sought a FISA warrant and repeated renewals to conduct temporary surveillance of Carter Page” As a former federal prosecutor and longtime member of HPSCI, Schiff could not have reasonably drawn these conclusions from the underlying facts. Indeed, DOJ’s Inspector General subsequently [identified](#) no fewer than 17 significant errors in the Page FISA applications. As Gerth [noted](#) for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, “[e]ventually the FBI declared that at least two of the four applications were no longer valid. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) found that all four applications had “violations of the government’s duty of candor.”

Once again, however, Schiff misled the American public based on his privileged access to classified information.

The Durham Report also details how, as summarized in [a subsequent news report](#):

Staffers for Democratic congressman Adam Schiff . . . threatened two university researchers to force them to help with an investigation into former president Donald Trump’s ties to Russia, the researchers told Special Counsel John Durham.

The researchers, from Georgia Tech University, told Durham that they were invited to Washington, D.C., in November 2018 to provide what they thought was a briefing about the school’s federal research contracts. Instead, they were lured into a meeting with staff members working for Schiff at the House Intelligence Committee and for [Senator Jack] Reed, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. The researchers said the Democratic staffers asked them to analyze . . . alleged links between Trump’s company and Russia’s Alfa Bank.

When they balked at the request because it was “inappropriate” conduct for a public university, the Democratic staffers issued what one researcher believed was a “mild threat.” . . . [A] staffer for Schiff pointed out the Democrat would soon take over as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, one researcher told Durham.

Although Durham declined to prosecute potential “contract fraud or abuse of government resources,” the statements of HPSCI staffers—which invoked the authority of, and were likely directed by, Schiff—clearly violate the law. Specifically, [5 U.S.C. § 7353\(a\)](#) prohibits congressional members or employees from “solicit[ing] anything of value from a person—(1) seeking official action from, doing business with, or . . . conducting activities regulated by, the individual’s employing entity; or (2) whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the individual’s official duties.” As the Committee on Ethics’ “[Gift Guidance](#)” succinctly notes, congressional members and staff may “not ask for a gift. . .”

In this case, HPSCI staffers working for Schiff sought something of value (uncompensated analysis) from people (university researchers) whose interests (government-funded research contracts) could have been affected by the performance or nonperformance of the staffers’ official duties.

Schiff’s pernicious pattern of engaging in behavior that discredits the House, in further violation of Rule XXIII, has extended well beyond the Russia Hoax. For example:

- In October 2019, the *Washington Post* [analyzed](#) Schiff’s public statement that HPSCI had “not spoken directly with the whistleblower” whose allegations

instigated the first impeachment of President Trump. The *Post* concluded that “Schiff . . . clearly made a statement that was false.”

- In September 2020, Schiff responded to a [report](#) from two U.S. Senate committees concerning Hunter Biden’s business dealings as follows: “With the release of this report and two Senate Committee Chairs promoting the same Russian disinformation, the Kremlin must be very pleased.” Previewing a line of attack that would be deployed in response to the subsequent release of documents from Hunter Biden’s abandoned laptop (which Schiff [dismissed](#) as a “smear . . . from the Kremlin”), Schiff further called the Senate report “an election year hit job that uses as its very basis Russian disinformation.” There was no factual basis for this statement, and—as the *Wall Street Journal* [noted](#) in April 2022—subsequent events have vindicated the Senate report.
- The “Twitter Files” [revealed](#) that, in November 2020, “Schiff’s Office” asked Twitter to, among other requests, “[r]emove any and all content about . . . [HPSCI] staff from its service—to include quotes, retweets, and reactions to that content.” In other words, in blatant violation of free speech principles and constitutional guarantees, a government official (Schiff) sought to coerce a private company to censor “any and all content” posted by users about his staff—public servants whose employment details (including salaries) are a matter of public record.

We appreciate for your prompt attention to this matter. We affirm that, to the best of our knowledge and ability, all evidence submitted was not obtained in violation of any law, rule, or regulation. Further, we acknowledge that the False Statements Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1001, applies to information submitted to the Office of Congressional Ethics.

Sincerely,



Russell T. Vought

President

Center for Renewing America

Cc: Rep. Michael Guest, Chairman, Committee on Ethics